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No. 170

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. JOLLY).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 18, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DAVID W. JOLLY to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

REMEMBERING MY FRIEND, HOWARD COBLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend of mine and an outstanding Member of this House who passed away on November 3.

Howard Coble served this House with honor, always concerned first and foremost with how the policies it enacted would affect those he served in North Carolina's Sixth Congressional District.

Howard Coble was a son of Greensboro, a Coast Guard veteran of the Korean war, a prosecutor, and a dedicated public servant. Howard believed strongly in this House and its role in our democracy.

In the 30 years we served together, we stood on opposite sides of debate far more than we were on the same side, but we had a close friendship that transcended politics or policy. Howard Coble was one of the kindest and most warm-hearted individuals I have encountered in my years of service in this Capitol.

Howard was incredibly proud of his North Carolina roots. He tried his best to make it to every parade and event in his district that he could. He was a champion of our Nation's first responders.

We served together in the Congressional Fire Services Caucus. Howard was steadfast in advocating for firefighter safety and for our Nation to meet its responsibility to those who fell in service to their communities.

On many occasions we participated together in ceremonies to honor the families of the fallen, and we met with those families as well. Howard's compassion and his devotion to these families were unparalleled.

He was also chair of the Congressional Trademark Caucus. We worked together on intellectual property issues over the years, an area critical to our economic competitiveness.

Mr. Speaker, like so many of our colleagues, I will miss Howard Coble very much.

There was a great incident that happened here on the floor of this House. In 1994 or 1993, Howard Coble came over to me. His chief of staff was a University of Maryland graduate. Howard Coble came over to me. Howard Coble was sort of a curmudgeon soul with a wonderful gravelly voice. He came over to me and said: STENY, you need to hire Debbie Yow at the University of Maryland as your athletic director.

Mr. Speaker, frankly, I didn't know what to think of this gravelly voiced, hard-nosed North Carolinian because he was not necessarily a Maryland fan himself, of course, there being four extraordinary teams in North Carolina.

I looked at Howard Coble. I didn't know Debbie Yow, but she was from North Carolina. As a matter of fact, her sister was the great coach at North Carolina State of the women's basketball team.

When I got back to my office, I called up Brit Kirwan, Mr. Speaker, who was the president of the University of Maryland at College Park at that point in time. I said: Brit, I don't know Debbie Yow, but Howard Coble believes she would be a good athletic director. If she can convince Howard Coble that one of the few women to head up an NCAA Division I athletic program would be a good athletic director, she must be really something.

We hired her just a few weeks later, and Howard Coble was right. She was extraordinary. She is now back in North Carolina.

But it was that kind of relationship I had with Howard Coble, as did so many Members on this floor. He loved the House and served it with distinction and humor. He believed that working together across party lines was in the best interest of America.

Those of us who were privileged to serve with Howard will always remember his geniality, his intellect, his abiding love of country, and, of course, his State of North Carolina. He left a lasting imprint on his community, his State, his country, and this House.

Mr. Speaker, we thank him for his lifetime of service.

JONNY WADE'S FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize my friend, Jonny Wade, an 8-year-old from Jerseyville, Illinois, who is battling a rare form of brain and spinal cancer.

After being diagnosed with cancer on Christmas Day of 2014, Jonny has undergone several surgeries as well as multiple rounds of radiation and chemotherapy. Despite the diagnosis, Jonny continues to think of others, and his rallying cry remains, "I don't want any other kid to have cancer."

While he was unable to travel to Washington, as I invited him to do just a few short months ago, to come here to advocate for cancer research, I want to take this time, Mr. Speaker, to speak out on his behalf.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death for children, yet only 4 percent of cancer research funds go to children. Jonny and his twin brother Jacky have a special place in my heart because I am the parent of twin boys, too. While Jonny and Jacky may not be here with me today, they brought their cause to the Capitol.

Pediatric cancer is a relentless disease, and we cannot waver in our efforts to eradicate it. For Jonny and the thousands of children who are diagnosed with cancer each year, we must all work together to fully fund pediatric cancer research.

The favorite sport of Jonny and Jacky is baseball. These two guys right here like to go to baseball games and football games. Unfortunately for both of them, they are St. Louis Cardinals fans. Being an Atlanta Braves fan, I like to joke with them about their choice in teams.

But I have got a baseball right here, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank all the colleagues who signed this baseball for me. I wanted everybody to sign, but as you can see, there is no room left.

This baseball is for you, Jonny. I want to thank you for being the fighter that you are.

THE CULTURE OF OPPOSITION NEEDS TO CHANGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, Chuck Rosenberg, the acting administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, recently called the notion of smoking medical marijuana a joke.

What is a joke is the job Rosenberg is doing as acting DEA administrator. He is an example of an inept, misinformed zealot who has mismanaged America's failed policy of marijuana prohibition.

Americans recognize it is time for a change in direction to legalize, regulate, and tax marijuana. Fifty-eight percent now support legalization, continuing an upward trend in public opinion polls and at the ballot box.

Over 75 percent of the American public supports medical marijuana, as do a majority of American physicians.

Rosenberg claims medical marijuana is a joke, but the proven therapeutic value of cannabis has prompted 23 States, Guam, and the District of Columbia to approve its medical application and an additional 17 States have authorized its more limited use.

Rosenberg's claim that more research is necessary is true, but it reeks of hypocrisy because the DEA, under his leadership, has made badly needed cannabis research difficult, and often impossible. If Rosenberg was doing his job, he would have visited with some of the hundreds of thousands who have found medical marijuana has had a profound effect on their lives and that of their families.

President Obama is the first sitting President to tell the truth about cannabis. His administration has not acted to shut down the adult or medical marijuana reforms sweeping the country. Sadly, it isn't just his DEA administrator who is undercutting his policy.

Earlier this year the Department of Justice took an outrageously flawed position on the Rohrabacher-Farr amendment that passed with strong bipartisan support, which clearly specified that the Federal Government should not interfere with State legal medical marijuana operations.

The Department of Justice and the DEA contend that it only prevents action against States, not individuals. This is a ridiculous interpretation of the law and caused a Federal court in California to rule this interpretation "defies language and logic" in deciding against them.

More recently, the Senate passed the MILCON-VA appropriations bill, which included an amendment offered by my colleague in Oregon, Senator MERKLEY, mirroring my legislation to allow VA doctors to recommend medical marijuana to their patients in accordance with State law.

Yet, on November 13, the Department of Veterans Affairs indicated they won't allow doctors and patients to participate in State legal marijuana laws, even if this bill becomes law.

Sadly, these actions by administration officials are indicative of a throwback ideology rooted in the failed war on drugs, which needs to stop.

They do not reflect the overwhelming body of evidence about the effects of medical marijuana, the reforms happening at the State level and in Congress, or the opinion of the American people.

They don't reflect the statements by the President himself and the official policy promulgated by former Deputy Attorney General Cole outlining the administration's commitment to stay out of the way of State marijuana laws.

There is overwhelming evidence that marijuana offers relief when nothing else has helped, including as a more effective pain management tool than highly addictive narcotics. Opioid overdoses are skyrocketing, and we have an epidemic of heroin abuse and overdose.

Sadly, the culture of opposition in the Federal Government continues. On one level, we have this amazing progress at the State and local level. We have made significant progress here in Congress with the introduction of over 20 bills in both Chambers dealing with the Federal treatment of cannabis and hemp, and the successful votes on three amendments in the House and three in Senate committees in this Congress.

This culture needs to change. Leadership needs to change. Rosenberg is clearly not the right fit for the DEA in this administration.

I would hope that the President directs the heads of all relevant agencies to adjust their policies, clarify regulations that deal with marijuana laws, establish policies that reflect changing State laws, and, most importantly, reflect the President's own position.

He has said that he has bigger fish to fry than interfere with State legalization efforts. It is time that the rest of his administration gets on board, and it should start with a new head of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CURBELO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, last week's gruesome terrorist attacks in Paris were a disturbing reminder that the war on terror is ongoing and that radical Islamic extremism represents a clear and present danger to all freedom-loving civilized people.

The time from September 11, 2001, up until today has been difficult for our Nation. We have seen our young men and women engaged in endless wars. We have lost thousands of American lives and spent a significant portion of our national treasure fighting in the Middle East. Costly mistakes were made in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. We are understandably a war-weary people.

However, last Friday we were reminded that the consequences of inaction or of weak actions are far greater than any risks associated with making a serious and unwavering commitment to confronting and defeating radical terrorists.

ISIS is not a problem to be managed or contained. This ambitious terrorist organization is a dangerous enemy of the United States and our allies that must be eradicated. If we refuse to fight ISIS on their home turf, we will have to fight them in the streets of Paris and maybe in our own communities.

Just as the previous administration recognized that its Iraq strategy was failing and needed a jolt, it is now time for President Obama and his national security team to show that they are serious about destroying this dangerous threat to the stability of the world and to our own very lives.